ROBERT BRIDGMAN's

REASONS

For Leaving the

QUAKERS.

SOME
REASONS
WHY

Robert Bridgman, and his Wife,

And ſome others in *HUNTINGTON-SHIRE*,

Have left the Society of the People called

QUAKERS,
AND

Have join'd in Communion with the Church of *ENGLAND*.

And ſome Paſſages contained in a Letter of *George Whitehead* to *R. J.* and *R. Bridgman*'s Reply to the ſame.

By *ROBERT BRIDGMAN*,

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SOME

REASONS

WHY

ROBERT BRIDGMAN, and others;

Have left the

QUAKERS.

IT has been matter of Sorrow and Shame unto me, and many others, that have now left the Quakers Communion, that we ſo long profeſſed the Chriſtian Religion, whilſt we remained ſo ignorant of the fundamental Principles of it, the Doctrine of the Trinity, or three Perſons of one Nature and Subſtance in the Godhead.

The Incarnation of the ſecond Perſon or Son of God our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

The Satisfaction and Atonement made unto God the Father, by his Obedience and Death upon the Croſs.

The Reſurrection and Aſcention of his Body and Perſon into Heaven.

His remaining in our Nature at the right hand of God, in the Glory of his Father, our Head, High-Prieſt and Interceſſour. The

The Faith and full perſuaſion of his ſecond, laſt, and outward appearance and coming again to raiſe the Dead Bodys of the Saints, and of all Men in the great Day and ſolemn Aſſize of all Nations, in which an Infallible and final Sentence will be paſſed upon all, according to the Deeds done in the Body, agreeable to the plain and poſitive ſenſe of divers Texts in Holy Scripture.

Theſe Doctrines and the Faith of them, wrought by the Operation of the Holy Ghoſt, the third Perſon in the Bleſſed Trinity, are Eſſential or Fundamental Parts and Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, without which, in the true Faith of them, we cannot be ſaved in this or in the World to come.

And therefore 'tis of great Weight and Conſequence, yea of the greateſt Importance, to every one under a Chriſtian Profeſſion, to be duly Inſtructed and rightly Informed, in theſe great and neceſſary Truths of the Chriſtian Religion, and without which, in ſome good meaſure, no Man can be rightly denominated a Chriſtian Man or Believer.

The Faith of God as a Great and Mercyful Creator and the Seal of his Power and Providence in and over all his Creatures, is indeed a neceſſary work, and our Love and Obedience to the Law and Light with which he inſtructs and enlightens our Nature, is a pretious and neceſſary condition on our parts, to fit and prepare us for the due reception of the Chriſtian Faith; and indeed without ſome experience of this ſort, 'tis in vain to pretend to any Religion, much more to the Chriſtian Religion. Yet the order and progreſs of our Faith and Hope

ought

ought to be duly diſtinguiſhed, for to reduce all Religion and Faith towards God, under a Profeſſion and Experience of Light and Truth, without any diſtinction of common and ſpecial Illumination or Grace, is dangerous to the Soul and very deſtructive to the real Foundation of the Chriſtian Religion. How far the People call'd *Quakers* in general, and ſome of their moſt noted and approved Authors and Miniſters in particular, have Ignorantly and Blaſphemouſly oppoſed this work of Faith and Reformation (begun and carried on in the Souls of many, by hearing the Word and Doctrine of the Goſpel declared in the Holy Scriptures, from Men qualified to Read and Expound the ſame) is now become ſo evident to ſuch whoſe Eyes the Lord in Mercy hath opened, that to contradict or deny it, muſt beſpeak very great Ignorance or Obſtinacy.

How far they have withſtood and rejected the Inſtitutions of our Bleſſed Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, in the due adminiſtration of them, and the ſincere and faithful practiſe of ſuch as are convinced of their Duty and Profit in receiving them, is alſo as evident to ſuch as have had occaſion to deal with them, or peruſe their Writings conſtantly publiſhed from their beginning. And how under pretence of higher Attainments and farther Glory, a Spirit of Pride and great Uncharitableneſs hath poſſeſſed them, is ſufficiently manifeſt by its fruits, in Cenſuring and Reproaching all other denominations of Profeſſed Chriſtians, whom they ſet to a great diſtance, and account as the World which yet lieth in Wickedneſs. And by a ſhew of Spirituality, Simplicity, Humility and Patience, have deceived

deceived themſelves, and many of the moſt ignorant and inadvertent Profeſſors, who inconſiderately and raſhly conclude, they are the moſt holy and reformed People and Church of God, becauſe they appear in a more ſedate, retired, and ſelf denying manner, as a Society and Body of People, than generally is obſerved of other Societies.

But whoever arrives to any tolerable underſtanding of ſound Chriſtian Principles, and attends an impartial Examination of what the *Quakers* preach and publiſh, ſhall not only find them very diſagreeable one with another, but, in general very oppoſite to true Chriſtianity. And that which alſo very much expoſeth them to contempt with all True Intelligent and Religious minds, is the liberty they take in their Apologies and Defences to quible and ſnuffle with dull and apparent Sophiſtry.

'Tis now become their repeated Practiſe to alter the ſenſe of their own as well as their Opponents writings, by adding or diminiſhing of words, by Tranſpoſing them, by playing upon ſuch as are equivocal, by connecting Matter that lies disjoynted, and disjoynting Matter that lies connected, by queſtioning the autography of their own Prints, when they cannot otherwiſe vindicate or defend them. And thus they inherit the *Jeſuites* practice ('tho through want of their Education they fall ſhort in their skill) and by this very means ruine their Cauſe, notwithſtanding their Zeal and ſpecious Pretences. 'Tis a mercyful Providence ſo many are delivered from the ſnare of their Spirit, which with ſoundings and Echoes works on the Imagination and Fancy of the more Ignorant and Credulous.

Did

Did they regard Truth and Juſtice, without reſpecting Perſons in Judgment, they would have never declined to be brought to the Teſt, before any competent number of Sober and Judicious Perſons, without making ſuch Pleas and Pretences to excuſe, and be excuſed as they have done.

Being detected, they became greatly inraged, and breath out their ſpite in Prophecies and Curſes, both in private and publick, againſt ſuch as oppoſe them; whilſt they are bleſſing and magnifying themſelves and their Faction in ſuch flights of Devotion as allarms and amuzes the Ignorant and Unwary. The account given by *George Keith* in his Books and Narratives of Matter of Fact, ſo well atteſted, is ſuch a Load upon them, that they are very uneaſie; and not daring to appear to juſtifie themſelves, are labouring to abuſe and miſrepreſent him. They have endeavoured to inſinuate, that Covetouſneſs, Pride and Envy are the motive of his practice: An Apoſtate, a *Judas*, a Renegado, are the Epithets they beſtow upon him. And in their *Word to the Well-inclin'd*, repreſent him the *Epitome* and very Common-place of all the Malice of their preceding Adverſaries: And theſe fine Characters they induſtriouſly ſpread throughout the Nation, to defame and reproach him; having a method effectually to do it, by ſpreading their Pamphlets according to an agreement of their Yearly Meeting, (which is their ſupreme Authority in this and in other Kingdoms and Countries where they have any ſettled Intereſt.) The Agreement and Order of their Yearly Meeting held in *London* the firſt, ſecond, third and fourth Days

of *June* 1691, and directed to the Quarterly and Monthly Meetings in *England*, and *Wales*, and elſewhere, was and is, That each Monthly Meeting (of which they had at that time about 150) in *England* and *Wales* (and ſince, no doubt, the number is greatly increaſed) was to take off two Books of a ſort, when both do not exceed the price of a Shilling, and to be ſent by the ſeveral Correſpondents in *London* (or their Order) to the Correſpondents of each County, who are to ſend up the Money out of their Meeting Stock; which ſufficiently encourages both the Author and Printer. And this Agreement and Order was expreſly made for the ſpreading their Books, as is more at large declared in their Yearly Meeting Paper, printed in the Year 1691. And thus they are encouraged to be continually ſcribling, and judge it to be (as they ſay in their *Word to the well-inclin'd*) the fairer, more ſubſtantial and edifying method.

But the miſery that attends their numerous Proſelytes, is the impreſſions they are under in partiality and prejudice; what is publiſhed by their Party paſſes for Truth, and that not only in Doctrine and Fact, but they conceive a peculiar preſence of God is a continual Bleſſing that accompanies them. The ſame conceit they have in all they ſay and do, and are generally ſo affected with a Reliſh and Savour of it, that puffs them up with intolerable Pride, even whilſt it appears to themſelves under a Diſguiſe of Humility. But true Humility is another thing, it ſubmits to Truth whereever, whenever and in whomſoever it appears, inlarging the Heart with Catholick Love, which like the

the attracting and bountiful Heaven, ſcatters its Dew on every Soyl, and maintains its correſpondence with an impartial influence. The Lord in Mercy increaſe this Vertue, and inable the ſincere in all perſuaſions to let go the ſhackles of their ſeveral ſingularities, looking up unto Jeſus the univerſal Head and Captain of their Salvation, who by his bleſſed and Holy Spirit is ſprinkling the Nations through the Faith of his Goſpel, and that without reſpect of perſons. And therefore let me beſeech ſuch of my Friends, as profeſs their Faith in a Crucified Jeſus, and in humility ſubmit to the means he has appointed as the Seals of his Covenant, and Symbols of his Preſence, to be very careful in all manner of Converſation, that ſo the Adverſary, who ſeeks many ways to undermine and lay waſte the Foundation and Pillars of the Chriſtian Religion, may be ſtop'd every way in which he appears. The greateſt reproach that at this time attends the Chriſtian Church, is a looſe Converſation in too many not ſeaſon'd with Grace and the fear of God? and this is the Ground and Plea of all Schiſmaticks, as well as it is the Air that infeſts the Atheiſt, who ſecretly concludes, becauſe of ſuch Liberty, there is not a God of ſuch Purity and Power, as the Chriſtians profeſs in their verbal Confeſſion. But this I can ſay from a good and comfortable experience, That there are many pious and heavenly-minded Souls, in ſeveral places, both Miniſters and People, that are as Lights, and as Salt, in their ſeveral Stations, though once I could hardly believe it, ſo much Filth and Dirt having been

caſt upon them by an ignorant, proud and obſtinate Generation of Men; whoſe feigned Simplicity and Humility, under a pretence of Subjection to a Power above the Magiſtrate, is very deluſive in the Appearance of it, but when duly examined proves chiefly the Fruit of Education and Humour.

Being taught and perſuaded, that Reaſoning is dangerous in things of Religion, they ſtop their Ears and cloſe their Eyes, until by degrees they grow hardy in Imagination and Fancy, in the ſtrength of which they have been ſuffered to proceed until their own Folly hath corrected them.

Whoever comes to a ſober mind, and attentively reads over the Hiſtory given by *George Fox* and his Delegates, in the Entrance of his Journal, may readily find, that an ignorant Education and Melancholly Temper, impreſſed and blown up by a Spirit of Enthuſiaſm, gave birth to his Faction in thoſe Hurricane Times (whilſt the Church lay deſpoyled of her Power and Privileges) and ſince that inundation of Hereſie and Schiſm, the Breach has remained too much unobſerved: And to my Underſtanding no better Expedient can readily be propoſed to heal up this Breach and recover the Waſts, than a laborious and diligent inſtruction of Youth, and detecting of Errour, by open and free Conferences judiciouſly managed in divers parts of the Nation.

Tis a lamentable thing, that in a Chriſtian Nation the publick Seals and Badges of its Communion ſhould be ſo ſlighted, neglected, oppoſed and rejected by a ſort and number of men that will not be accountable

countable in Matter of Fact for their Miſtakes and Abuſes. 'Tis a moſt lame and ſcandalous Inſinuation againſt the Inſtitution and Practice of Outward Baptiſm, which *George Whitehead* advances in his *Rector Examined*, p. 27. ſaying, When this Rector (meaning Mr. *Merriton*) can demonſtrate a *Probatum eſt*, of ſuch Virtue in that poor Element (as he calls it) of Water-baptiſm, as to cure polluted and diſtemper'd Souls, as if the Iſſue or Effect of a means that is preſcribed, muſt determine the right or lawfulneſs of its Inſtitution and Practice without any Exception; he may at the ſame rate queſtion the Authority of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt and his Apoſtles, in their Teaching and Preaching, becauſe many that heard them were not effectually Cleanſed. And in the Commiſſion that was given *Math.* 28. 19. there is no more mention made of outward teaching, than of outward Baptiſm, and the *Quakers* may as well reject Teaching with Words as Baptizing with Water. But to manifeſt how liable they are to pervert the True Senſe of the Matter, ſee what *George Whitehead* ſays concerning the Supper, Page 35. of his *Rector Examined*, where he produces ſome Teſtimonies out of the *Book of Martyrs* to favour his Cauſe, which duly conſidered are directly againſt it. The Bread and Wine in the Supper, are Figurative and Symbolical, and as the Eating and Drinking by the faithful Receiver, Intitles him to the Graces and Bleſſings of the Spirit of Chriſt, ſo the breaking the Bread and pouring out the Wine, were Inſtituted as a means to preſerve the Faith and Remembrance of his Body and Blood, that was Bro-

ken

ken and Shed for the Remiſſion of Sin and which is now Exalted and Glorified in the Heavens, and he being now in Heaven in his Body out of the reach of our Bodily Senſes.

One end of the Supper is to Receive and Eſtabliſh the Faith of his Exiſtence, and aſſurance of his coming in his Body to Judge us; and thoſe Arguments of Dr. *Cranmer* and *Ridley* which *George Whitehead* recites, were at that time advanced to oppoſe the Erroneous Conceit of Tranſubſtantiation. See the *Book of Martyrs* page 74. Where tis ſaid, " that to believe the Wafer and Wine to be Tran-" ſubſtantiated into the Body and Blood of our Lord " Jeſus Chriſt, [Argument the ſecond] it varieth from " the Articles of Faith, *He aſcended into Heaven, and* " *ſitteth on the right hand of God the Father, from* " *whence* (and not from any other place, ſaith St. " *Auguſtin*) *he ſhall come to judge both the quick and* " *the dead.* Thirdly, It deſtroyeth and taketh " away the Inſtitution of the Lord's Supper, which " was commanded only to be uſed and continued " until the Lord Himſelf ſhould come, if therefore " He be now really preſent in the Body of his Fleſh, " then muſt the Supper ceaſe. For a Remembrance, " is not of a thing preſent, but of a thing paſt and " abſent, and there is a difference between Remem-" brance and Preſence, and (as one of the Fathers " ſaith) a Figure is in vain where the thing figured " is preſent.

Here you ſee the Fathers and Martyrs intended one thing, and *George Whitehead* wou'd make them to intend another; the Supper is a Figure and Sign no

not only of the Inward and Spiritual Grace, received by the Faithful in their partaking of it, but alſo of the Body of Chriſt now abſent in Heaven, the Faith of which being loſt among the Quakers, and ſo much denyed and oppoſed by their obſtinate pervertion; the reaſon of the Inſtitution appears the more neceſſary, and the frequent and due practice of it appears the more ſeaſonable; and 'tis to be hoped that theſe poor Elements, as they are pleaſed to call them, with the Bleſſing of God at the Adminiſtration and Reception of them, will prove two ſuch Pillars and Supports of the Chriſtian Faith and Experience, that the Combination of Hell ſhall not prevail, tho her Gates many ways are ſet open to furniſh the Army of *Abaddon*.

'Tis a ſpecious pretence the *Quakers* have made to the Virtue and Efficacy of the Inward Principle, as having therein an Art of Extraction, by which they perform as by one ſingle *Still*, all that can be propoſed from the variety in a Laboratory. This very Compariſon and Illuſtration I heard from *William Penn* in a publick Meeting at *Grace-Church-Street*, and as much he delivers in his *Primitive Chriſtianity*, where he Rants at a very unreaſonable rate, and as much diſparages the Reputation of their Principle by the extravagancy of his Notion, as *George Whitehead* has done by the Irregularity of his practice. I am ſure no Principle of Truth ever taught *William Penn* to advance ſuch a Notion of the Compoſition of Man, as he delivers in p. 71. of his *Primitive Chriſtianity*. "Man, (ſays he) "as I ſaid juſt now, is a Compoſition of both "Worlds

"Worlds, his Body is of this, his Soul of the other "World — by the Body the Soul looks into and be- "holds this World, and by the World it beholds "God, the World that is without End. So that the World without End, and God, are with him Terms Synonimous, and of this endleſs World is [with him] a part of Man's Compoſition, his Soul is of its Eſſence, and beholds its being a kin to God, not only by a Relation but in Subſtance: And in his Book called *Judas and the Jews*, p. 130. he hath the following Words. *The new deſpiſed flock of God ſhall reſt with him in that World which never had beginning, and is without end*; thus he gives us a Deſcription of God, and of the Soul of Man, its being a part of him. And thus, after all the Shuffling and Cutting about the Soul, and Soul of the Soul, 'tis eaſie to ſee how naturally *William Penn* jumps in with *George Fox* in his Notion of the Soul, ſo fully expoſed and explained by *George Keith* in his fourth Narrative, p. 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67. And as in this his Book, entituled *Primitive Chriſtianity*, he defines the Soul to be part of God, ſo in his Book entituled, *The Invalidity of* John Faldo, *p.* 365. he defines the Nature of the Body and oppoſes the concluſion of his Opponent, who ſpeaking of the Reſurrection of the Body, ſays, it ſhall have the ſame Matter, tho' not the ſame Groſſneſs; it ſhall have the ſame Eſſential Form, tho not the ſame Accidents. *William Penn*'s Anſwer will not allow that he ever read in Scripture any thing favourably towards ſuch a Concluſion. His words are, *I never read yet of a Body having the ſame Matter, and not the ſame Groſſneſs, the*

the ſame Subſtance and Eſſence, and not the ſame Accidents; by which account we muſt believe that either *William Penn* never read the Scripture, or that he believes the Body of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Bodies of thoſe that aroſe after his Reſurrection, were changed in Subſtance. For according to him, if they had the ſame Subſtance they muſt alſo retain the ſame Groſſneſs and Accidents; and conſequently that the Body of our Lord Jeſus, now in Heaven, is a groſs and mortal Body, if they believe he has the ſame Body now, which he had upon the Earth. And yet notwithſtanding this ſort of Reaſoning, the *Quakers* Objections and conſtant Clamour againſt all ſorts of Chriſtians, has been to inſinuate the Carnality of their Notions. And thus do they raiſe ſuch a duſt of Confuſion by their Doctrines and Diſtinctions, that many poor People are led entangled in a Miſt of thick Darkneſs.

I could give a large and particular Relation of ſundry Conferences I have had with ſeveral of Note among them, (appointed to hear and examine my Reaſons for declining their Meetings) from whom I cou'd never yet obtain any plain and poſitive Anſwer to this neceſſary and ſeaſonable Queſtion,

Whether our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is now in Heaven above, or without us, in the true and intire Nature of Man glorified, the ſame for Subſtance which he had on Earth, and forever to come united with the Godhead.

But finding this Doctrine ſo fully and ſo ſafely expreſſed in the Articles of the Church of *England*, as alſo thoſe other neceſſary and eſſential Principles of the Chriſtian Religion, inclined me to make a farther Search into the Matter and Manner of her Publick Worſhip; which appearing to me ſo ſound and inſtructive, I could not in Conſcience delay my adventuring to make ſome Approaches towards her Communion.

And through a merciful Providence it has pleaſed Almighty God ſo to influence and to bleſs due means of Inſtruction, that my dear Wife, with ſeveral of our Neighbours, who were alſo in Communion with the People called *Quakers*, are become religiouſly affected with the Publick Worſhip; and I hope the Lord will preſerve us in the Sincerity of our Intentions, the Inſinuations notwithſtanding and Reproaches of our Adverſaries: An inſtance of which I think fit here to ſubjoyn, not being likely to obtain any offer of Juſtice from the Perſon concerned.

Upon my Wife and Children's receiving Baptiſm in the Church of *England*, *George Whitehead* writes a Letter of Condolence to my Wife's Father, wherein he inſinuates after this manner:

"*Dear Brother*,

" I have been often ſenſible of thy Exerciſe and " Affection occaſioned by the miſerable Backſliding " of ſuch near Relations, who have ſo long pro- " feſſed the bleſſed Truth among us. The bleſ- " ſed Truth which we have received from the Be- " ginning, in Life and Power, will ſtand for ever,

" and

" and out-live all its Adverſaries; and they who
" are approved and ſtand faithful therein, ſhall the
" more be manifeſt, and ſhine, when Shame and
" Confuſion ſhall cover the Rebellious, who re-
" proach God's Heritage and People to excuſe their
" own Revolting and Looſeneſs of Spirit.

The Letter in which theſe Paſſages are, falling, providentially into my Hand, I wrote to *Geo. Whitehead*, as is hereafter expreſt. But being in *London* a conſiderable time, and having no proſpect of having ſuch a Meeting as I deſir'd, think fit to expoſe it, as matter of Caution to himſelf and ſuch others as may be under temptation to practiſe the like, to diſparage and diſcourage with ſuch Blaſts of Reviling.

Hunt. the 16th *April*, 1700.

" *George Whitehead*,

" In theſe Paſſages [which I tranſcribed to him]
" are contained a ſevere Charge by way of Inſinu-
" ation againſt my ſelf and my Wife, who are the
" near Relations mentioned in that Letter: And we
" being ſuch (had you proved your Charge) the un-
" worthineſs of your Diſpoſition, notwithſtanding,
" hath ſufficiently appeared, in offering ſo to aggra-
" vate, and by conſequence to ſet ſuch near Rela-
" tions at too great a Diſtance. But whereas your
" Charge and Inſinuations remain unproved by you,
" they ought in Juſtice to be returned upon you as
" a Slander. If you think you can make Proof of

" theſe miſerable, yea and I may add, deteſtable
" things upon us, we deſire you would do it; and
" that you may be the more manifeſt and ſhine, we
" care not how publickly you do it. Your writing
" in ſuch a manner to my Father, without any Pre-
" monition to us (had we been really guilty) looks
" not only like a Deed of Darkneſs, but (we being
" innocent) too much intitles you to the Character
" of thoſe mentioned in the 11th Pſalm, *Who bend*
" *the Bow, and make ready their Arrow upon the String,*
" *that they may privily ſhoot at the upright in heart.*

" Had not your Name and Pretences been what
" they are, we ſhould have endeavoured to have
" overlook'd your Reproach, (as we have done a
" great deal from others of a meaner Rank among
" you) caſt upon us, as we verily believe, for our
" open Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Faith, and practi-
" ſing the Inſtitutions of our bleſſed Lord and Savi-
" our Jeſus Chriſt, in ways moſt agreeable to our
" Judgment, upon a ſerious, deliberate and impartial
" Enquiry and Conſideration; and this we take to
" be the Reaſon of your Diſpleaſure, knowing ve-
" ry well how you have ſlighted, oppoſed, and re-
" jected thoſe great and neceſſary Truths, and pro-
" per means of Chriſtian Fellowſhip and Communi-
" on, appointed, we believe, for that end by our
" Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and practiſed by his holy Apo-
" ſtles and Diſciples in the firſt and pureſt Ages of
" Chriſtianity. And you in particular bearing ſuch
" a Name and Sway (amongſt ſo many deluded,
" though many of them, I believe, well-meaning
People) and ſo generally paſſing under the Cha-

" racter

" racter of an honourable and worthy Miniſter of
" Chriſt, 'tis therefore highly neceſſary to take ſome
" Notice of your practice. And I do hereby ac-
" quaint you that my Occaſions calling me to *Lon-*
" *don* in a little time, I ſhall expect you will give me
" a Meeting before ſome ſober and judicious Perſons,
" either to endeavour the Proof of your Charge,
" or to retract what you have in ſuch manner inſi-
" nuated againſt us. If you think fit to decline to
" give me ſuch a Meeting, I ſhall have reaſon to take
" it as a ſufficient demonſtration that Shame and
" Confuſion is over you, in that very manner, and
" for the very ſame Cauſe ſuggeſted againſt us in
" your Letter. Thus much at preſent from your
" abuſed Friend and Kinſman,

R. Bridgman.

To which Letter I may now add what is written in the 26th Chapter of the Book of *Proverbs*, *v.* 26, 27. *Whoſe Hatred is covered by Deceit, his Wickedneſs ſhall be ſhewed before the whole Congregation. Whoſo diggeth a Pit, ſhall fall therein; and he that rolleth a Stone, it will return upon him.*

FINIS.

Page 16. l. 3. for *the World it*, read *the Word it*.

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